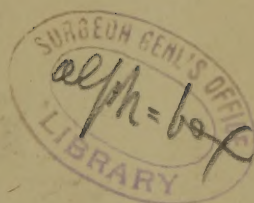


Rockwell (P. G.)

a biographical sketch

of
Dr. Edward Field xxx



A BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH
OF
DR. EDWARD FIELD,
OF WATERBURY.

BY P. G. ROCKWELL, M. D.

DR. EDWARD FIELD, of Waterbury, Conn., was the son of Dr. Simeon Field, a respectable practitioner of medicine, who removed from Longmeadow, a town near Springfield, Mass., to Enfield, Conn., where the subject of this sketch was born.

Of the childhood and early youth of Dr. Field little is known. At the age of 12 he commenced the study of medicine under the tuition of the late Dr. Cogswell, of Hartford, Conn. Having completed his preliminary medical education, he obtained a license to practice his profession from a committee acting in behalf of the Hartford County Medical Society. His inclinations and tastes, at that early day, led him to seek a situation in the naval service of the country. He was successful in his application and accordingly received the appointment of surgeon's mate in the year 1799. The commission of appointment, which is still in the possession of his children, bears the broad, bold signature of the elder President Adams. Soon after receiving this commission, he was stationed on board the new frigate Congress, which was directed to cruise about the East India Islands; but before arriving at its destination it experienced a serious storm, which so disabled the vessel, that she was obliged to return after a slow and irksome voyage of months.

The craft was repaired and ordered to the West Indies. During this cruise an affair of more serious nature occurred than that of the former voyage. A mutiny broke out in which the Dr. became crippled in one of his arms for life. These discouragements in succession

(doubtless) abated the ardor of the young surgeon for a life in the navy, for we find him at the end of two years from the time he received his commission, voluntarily resigning the same. After this experience, Dr. Field decided to practice his profession on land. He accordingly located in the then small town of Waterbury, a town which at the time he became a resident therein, was made up of sparse population and not over abundantly able to compensate a physician for his services. The region in and about Waterbury was rough and mountainous, requiring great labor and toil to discharge the duties of a practitioner of medicine; yet notwithstanding these disadvantages we find him assiduously devoted to his practical duties in this locality for a period of more than 30 years. He was married at the age of 25 years to Miss Sarah Baldwin, (the oldest daughter of Dr. Baldwin, one of the older physicians of the town,) by whom he had one son, whom he educated to the same profession with himself, and who is a respectable practitioner in the State of Michigan. In the year 1808, but little more than a year from the time of their marriage, Mrs. Field died. He afterward married Miss Esther Baldwin, the sister of his former wife, who survived him several years. By her he had five children, two of whom were sons and three daughters; all but one daughter are still alive.

Dr. Field was a man of medium height and size, prominent features, an open manly countenance, yet of mild expression. He was not over quick in his appreciative faculties, but cautious and deliberative. He was never bold in his practice; rather careful and discriminating; while he aimed at correctness of conclusion in diagnosis and efficiency in prescribing for the sick, he studiously avoided over-acting or prescribing at a venture. His practice for many years was large, laborious and unremunerative; his ride extended much into the adjoining towns. As the town of Waterbury increased in population his practice became large within its limits. He ranked above mediocrity as a medical practitioner of his day. He was for a long time a member of the Connecticut Medical Society, and took a lively interest in its transactions. He confined his practice mostly to the sphere of medicine, declining surgical cases, when he reasonably could. As a citizen he was affable, public spirited, though unobtrusive. Devoting himself exclusively to his professional duties, he never meddled with political matters, nor sought any kind of notoriety except that of a good physician and an honest man. He was the friend of good order, morality and education. He was for a long time a member of the Congregational Church in Waterbury—a consistent, practical Chris-

tian. Cheerfully he bore his share of the burthens of society, ever making additions to the large stock of respect and esteem with which he was favored. Like many medical men in full practice, as he advanced in years, with an accumulation of cares, his health became so impaired that for the last four years of his life he was obliged to circumscribe his practice. He unfortunately became depressed, and in the year 1840, whilst suffering from an unusual fit of melancholy, which amounted to insanity, he took his own life. He died, as he had lived, universally respected by his large and extensive acquaintances, who mourned his untimely death.

